nations should pool their resources and move quickly to implement policies, said Tarja Halonen, president of Finland, asserting that “the world is our joint responsibility.”

While she and other speakers acknowledged that the globe has made strides to implement the MDGs, there were also sober assessments of what lies ahead. Economics professor Joseph E. Stiglitz commented on how large a challenge it is to administer to setting goals and deadlines to accomplish the MDGs. Stiglitz pointed out that the initiative should be considered not as legislation but as an effort to build a consensus that is “a shared aspiration and commitment to what the world and most people in the United States want to achieve, the elimination of poverty and creation of a greater sense of social justice.”

Following a presentation by Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of the Earth Institute and of the UN Millennium Project, said that recent natural catastrophes such as the tsunami in Asia and Hurricane Katrina demonstrate that “no place on this planet” is outside of vulnerability. The parallel outsourcing of aid to both regions, Sachs said, was extraordinary. “Who would have thought that the U.S. would be the recipient of emergency aid?” he said, adding that it shows how much “we can count on the world and the world is counting on us.”

In brief, here are the main points each leader made, arranged in order of their appearance at the forum.

Tarja Halonen, president of Finland. The president spoke about her country’s journey from relativity poverty to prosperity—thanks to economic growth. “The Finnish universal appeal of freedom is spreading,” she reflected, noting that the revolution that brought him to power was non-violent and unifying, despite ethnic and religious differences among people. And he added that “the appeal of freedom is so universal.”

Reflected on the situation in Africa, Rwandan president Paul Kagame noted that at a time of unprecedented creation of wealth and knowledge, “there are still frightening levels of poverty for the majority of the world’s population,” including 450 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. His nation is making progress, Kagame said, by introducing universal primary education and gender equality. But he sees no way to achieve the MDGs unless Western powers adopt three important policies—increasing the quantity and quality of their development assistance, intranational policies and agreeing to debt cancellation.

Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski said that the expansion of the European Union is a modern form of the Solidarity movement that began in his own country some 25 years ago. Solidarity quickly became a widespread political movement and a strong voice for the unions and agreements and agreeing to debt cancellation.

A small group of students met with President Jalal Talibani of Iraq, thanking the American people for “getting rid of dictatorship in Iraq and fighting terrorists with us.” He compared the struggle in his country today to American soldiers fighting WWII. Commenting on calls for a pullout of U.S. troops from Iraq, Talibani predicted that this would lead to a victory for the terrorists and “would threaten the countries and the entire civilized world.”

Responding to an audience question from an Iraqi woman studying at Columbia who wants to return home, Talibani assured her that the country is building a pluralistic society “based on inclusion” for all those “who share a vision of a democratic country.”

Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the president of Sierra Leone, said his government has chosen the path of non-violence in dealing with a rebel faction that has taken refuge in Sierra Leone’s hinterland. Peaceful dialogue has allowed his country to emerge from a civil war that resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than two million people, many of whom are now refugees in neighboring countries. “I inherited a severely battered nation,” Kabbah said of his election in 1998. “But the killing and maiming has been abated by a commitment from people to end violence.” Economic recovery is one result. Kabbah pointed out that by adhering to the MDGs, Sierra Leone is poised to go from a sustenance-farming economy to a surplus-farming economy, with rice available for export soon.


What’s New at Columbia Graduate Schools

Highlights of events, programs, honors and noteworthy happenings

Arts & Sciences

www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/index.html

OSCAR BIANCHI, a first-year graduate student in the Music Department's Composition Program, won the 2005 GAUDEAMUS PRIZE for his composition Primordia Rumor (for soprano and ensemble), awarded at the International Gaudemus Music Week in Amsterdam, Holland, in early September.

Medicine

http://cumc.columbia.edu/mednews/050921.html

The Medical Center has been awarded a $25 MILLION GRANT to develop new technology for the treatment of large numbers of people for radiation exposure in the event of a terrorist attack on the New York area. The new technology will allow for the irradiation of a radiological “dirty bomb.”

Journalism

www.jrn.columbia.edu

The journalism school has received FIVE NEW DONATIONS TOTALLING NEARLY $18 MILLION, including three of the largest gifts ever received by the school. One of the donations will go toward the creation of the TONI STABLE CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM, expected to open in September 2006. Another gift will support the creation of the HINDERY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, providing tuition assistance to students enrolled in masters programs who have demonstrated superb achievement as well as financial need. The Hindery Fellows will also have their own seminar program. A gift from Katherine and David Moore will establish the JOSEPH PULITZER II-EDITH PULITZER MOORE CHAIR, to be held by a distinguished journalist. The second part of the gift, which teaching at the journalism school, focuses on politics, government and public policy, will support the creation of a PULITZER-MOORE SCHOLARS PROGRAM. At least one Pulitizer-Moore Scholar each year will be an international student from the developing world. David Moore is a grandson of Joseph Pulitzer, founder of the journalism school. The chair and the program are named for his uncle and mother. A contribution from Ira A. Lipman will support a JOHN CHANCELOR SCHOLARSHIP, to provide significant financial aid to students who demonstrate leadership qualities exemplified by the pioneering NBC News anchor The new program complements the JOHN CHANCELLOR AWARD, which the school will administer with corporate funding. A gift from two Columbia alums will support the creation of the MAGGIE AND GORDON GRAY FELLOWSHIP FOR LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN STUDY to provide financial aid for at least two U.S.-based graduate students who are committed to careers in international reporting with special emphasis on at least one of the students being interest in covering the Middle East and Africa. Financial support for the fellows will represent the largest set of gifts pledged to the school in a single year. TheState should participate in the debate over the EU’s future, the president of Poland has defended Poland’s presence in Iraq, saying that his government had responded to the U.S. call for participation in the war “because Poland has been alone so many times.”

General Pervez Musharraf, the president of Pakistan, said his country is on the road to economic recovery after years of war, political turmoil, extremism and a refugee crisis. We were called a failed state,” Musharraf said, but now Pakistan “is quoted as a model, an example by financial institutions for Third World turnarounds.” Besides the economy, Musharraf said the government is focusing on developing infrastructure such as electricity, potable water, health and education as well as tackling problems like violence against women and democracy. The goal, he said, is to create a “democratic moderate Islamic republic” that will stand against the spread of terrorism, and maintain the war effort in favor of human rights and democracy.

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TO LISTEN to the remarks in full, as well as the audience dis- cussion that followed, go to www.worldleaders.columbia.edu

SEE ALSO: Highlights of the exchanges be- tween world leaders and students, page 4